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## Village committee opposes freeway – again

By Doug Murphy

March 1, 2007 - 5:32PM

The Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee Monday night voted unanimously for the fourth time to oppose construction of the South Mountain Loop 202 Freeway on Pecos Road and agreed to send out letters, with questions and concerns it received from the community, to a dozen elected officials.

Questions cover the spectrum, from how the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) plans to replace three wells used by a homeowners association if the freeway is built along Pecos Road to how the city envisions traffic around Desert Vista High School if there is no freeway interchange at 32nd Street and motorists jam Liberty Lane.

"These are all questions that haven't been answered," said Laurel Arndt, a member of the Village Planning Committee and its representative on ADOT's Citizen Advisory Team looking at the freeway design and placement.

The letter, along with specific questions, will be sent to Gov. Janet Napolitano, Congressman Harry Mitchell, along with state lawmakers, city officials, the chairmen of the Arizona Senate and House transportation committees, plus the Maricopa County Association of Governments, which controls the \$1.1 billion project's purse strings.

And in case there is any question of how the city-appointed Village Planning Committee feels, the letter clearly opposes using Pecos Road for the freeway.

"The impacts of this alignment on our community and its homes, schools, churches and parks are just too severe to overcome," says the letter, which will be signed by committee chairman Doug Cole.

To help make sure the committee gets answers to its questions, a deadline of April was included in the letter so that lawmakers wouldn't procrastinate, and so when the planning committee convenes for its regular meeting April 23 it will have answers to the community's questions.

ADOT first approved the South Mountain Loop 202 in 1988, to connect Interstate 10 in Ahwatukee Foothills, travel west around and through South Mountain Park and reconnecting with I-10 around 55th Avenue. For the past few years ADOT has been updating the plan, to take into account the rapid growth in Ahwatukee Foothills and on the west side of the project.

The current plan calls for a 10-lane freeway, which means 255 Ahwatukee Foothills homes would have to be demolished to make way for the freeway and its associated water retention areas. Opponents, including a local group – Protecting Arizona's Resources and Children ([www.protectazchildren.org](http://www.protectazchildren.org)) – say that a freeway within feet of Ahwatukee Foothills schools would pose a health hazard for small children and residents alike.

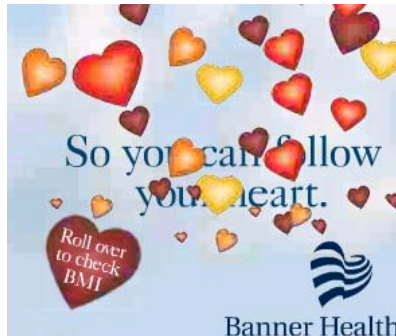
ADOT ([www.azdot.gov/ROADS/SouthMtn/CAT.htm](http://www.azdot.gov/ROADS/SouthMtn/CAT.htm)) has said that the 23-mile-long stretch of freeway is critical to the Valley's transportation network.

A preliminary decision is possible this summer, with a final decision on the freeway route by early next year.

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